

Remarks

Claims 1-14 are pending. Claims 1 and 7 have been amended. Support for the amendments can be found in the specification, *inter alia*, at page 5, line 26, and page 10, lines 25 et seq. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that no new matter has been added.

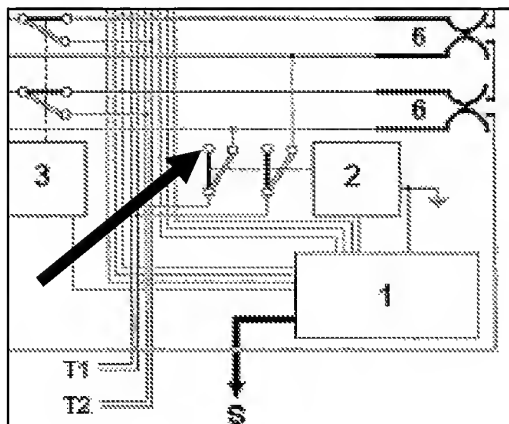
Based on the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the outstanding rejections and passage of the claims to allowance.

§ 103 Rejections

Claims 1-14 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mura (WO 03/065699) in view of Walance et al. (U.S. 5,832,058). Applicant responds as follows.

The cited references, taken alone, or in combination, do not teach or suggest a circuit including a primary branch "...with at least one switch which in a first state connects the primary branch with the bus and in a second, normal state, when the primary branch is not in use, connects the primary branch with ground" as is recited in claim 1. As is described in the present application, only those primary branches are connected to ground that are currently not used, but at least one other primary branch, that is in use, would remain operational.

In contrast, the Mura/Walance combination does not disclose a primary branch that can be connected to ground when not in use, while another primary branch is operational to measure properties of a communication line. As illustrated below, Mura discloses a connecting device in which a bus line can be connected to a communication line (see Mura Fig. 5, with the lower right portion of the figure highlighted below) by switches, sketched to the left of box labelled "2".



These switches are either connected to the communications line or they are placed in an open condition, not to ground. In the Office Action (page 2), it is stated that Walance teaches a primary branch connected to ground in a second state. Thus, the Patent Office combines Walance with Mura. However, Applicant respectfully submits that connecting the “open” position of the switch of Mura to ground, as per the alleged suggestion of Walance, would connect a line of the bus to ground and thus prevent any signal to be transmitted over that line of the bus. The line of the bus connected to ground would be rendered inoperational for its intended purpose. As the entire line of the bus is connected to ground, other branches of that line cannot be used any more, either. Thus, the grounded bus line is not only rendered useless for the module comprising the switch through which the bus line is put on ground, but for all other modules, resulting in the entire bus line being virtually put out of service when connected to ground (see remainder of Mura, Fig. 5, which shows the extending bus line). As such, the combination of Mura and Walance cannot render claim 1 obvious, as the proposed modification of Mura cannot render Mura unsatisfactory for its intended purpose (See MPEP 2143.01).

Claim 13, which recites the circuit in accordance with claim 1, is also patentable over the Mura/Walance combination.

Regarding claim 7, for at least the reasons discussed above, the Mura/Walance combination does not teach or suggest a method comprising “connecting only that primary branch through which access to a telecommunication line is to be established with the bus while the others of the at least two primary branches remain connected to ground.”

Accordingly, for at least the reasons above, Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection of claims 1-14 under 35 USC § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mura in view of Walance et al. has been overcome and should be withdrawn.

Conclusion

In view of the above, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application is requested. Please contact the undersigned should there be any questions or in order to expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date

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